(c) and (d) Government took up the matter strongly with Malaysian authorities that led to the immediate release of all but 3 deported since for overstay. Malaysian leaders including Acting Prime Minister have expressed regret and apologized over the incident. The Malaysian government has also conveyed that they would not like this incident to mar the tempo of our multi-faceted bilateral relations.

Indian workers in Gulf Countries

†3015. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of workers of Indian origin who went to the gulf countries till 2000 for various non-technical jobs and the number of workers out of them who have returned, so far;

(b) the number of such workers in these countries who are undergoing punishment or are being prosecuted as per law of the land; and

(c) what arrangements would be made to bring these wretched workers back by providing them suitable assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) As per information received from Ministry of Labour, 32,10,610 Indian workers went to countries in the Gulf between 1991 and 2000 for employment. Data on returnees is not available since workers who return do not inform any Government agency about their return.

(b) There are 7176 Indian workers undergoing imprisonment or are being prosecuted in the Gulf countries.

(c) Indian Missions ensure that there is no miscarriage of justice in respect of these cases. Efforts are also made to ensure speedy trial.

Damage control measures on Malaysian crisis

3016. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what diplomatic damage control measures have been taken by

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Government in the face of Malaysian crisis involving harassment of 270 IT professionals from India by the Malaysian police;

(b) what hindsight Government had gained over a similar episode involving detention of Indian IT entrepreneur (Managing Director of Polaris) in Djakarta earlier by the Indonesian authorities;

(c) whether the NASSCOM has strongly taken up the matter with Government; and

(d) whether the present Malaysian episode has been found to have links with the Muslim fundamentalists and ethnic Chinese who want to keep away Indian enterprises from Malaysia and other South East Asian countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Government had taken up strongly with Malaysian authorities, the detention of 195 Indian IT professionals. That led to the immediate release of all but 3 deported since for overstay. Malaysian leaders including Acting Prime Minister have expressed regret and apologized over the incident.

(b) Detention of Polaris officials in Jakarta was due to a commercial dispute.

(c) On both occasions, NASSCOM was in touch with Government.

(d) Available facts do not suggest any such linkages.

India's concern on Iraq War

3017. SHRI NATWAR SINGH:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. President had talked over telephone to the Prime Minister before attacking Iraq;

(b) if so, whether India had conveyed its concern to the U.S. President in this regard and advised him not to go for war;